



NCEL Fact Sheet: Rhino Horn and Elephant Ivory Bans

Illegal ivory trafficking is an escalating global issue. Elephants and rhinos may soon be driven to extinction by poaching. The demand for elephant ivory and rhino horn, driven by China, Vietnam, the United States and other countries, has created a massive international market that can have detrimental economic, social and environmental effects.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [recommended](#) instituting a near ban on the domestic ivory trade, and placed a moratorium on ivory importation. A host of states that have significant ivory markets or are concerned about the poaching crisis have enacted or are contemplating a ban on the ivory and rhino horn trades in their jurisdictions.

Key Points:

- Poaching is now a sophisticated [international crime racket](#) and a national security threat. Terrorist organizations such as al-Shabaab in Somalia, the Janjaweed militia in Sudan and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda obtain millions from ivory trafficking and use it to finance their attacks on Americans and others.
- Rhinos are on the brink of extinction. There are [only 28,000 rhinos](#) left globally, and 20,000 of these are the Southern white rhino. There are only 8,000 of the other four species of rhinos combined.
- Over 100,000 elephants were poached from 2010 to 2012. It is estimated that there are about 500,000 African elephants left in the wild. (National Academy of Sciences)
- Approximately 35,000 elephants are killed annually, [close to 100 elephants every day](#). At this rate elephants will be extinct in a few decades.
- The U.S. is the world's second largest consumer of ivory behind China. One-third of ivory sold in the U.S. was recently carved, and thus was illegally imported from recently poached elephants. (HSUS)
- Wildlife poaching is worth \$8-10 billion per year, and ranks only behind narcotics, counterfeiting, and human trafficking in international crime activities.

Legislation:

- In August 2014 [New Jersey](#) and [New York](#) became the first states to ban sales of ivory and rhino horn products.
- At least 12 states including [Hawaii](#), [Florida](#) and Massachusetts are considering or are about to introduce bills to prohibit ivory trade.
- Some state bills include exceptions to the ban on the sale of ivory, including antique ivory not less than 100 years old and held by permit and/or inheritance.

Other Resources:

- 96 Elephants: www.96elephants.org; see their [sample bill language](#) and [FAQ sheet](#).

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